

Mushoku Tensei Redundancy Chapter 10-13

Chapter 10: The Day The Doll Walked - First Part

It was storming that day.

Rain struck the ground as if trying to wash it away, and enormous bolts of lightning fell towards the earth.

The light from these strikes illuminated the inside of a certain house.

A single house, standing in a barren plain.

In that house, two Mad Scientists laughed.

“Hahaha!! MUWAHAHAHAHAH!! FINALLY! IT HAS FINALLY HAPPENED!”

“YES! AFTER ALL THIS TIME! IT’S FINALLY COMPLETE!”

The two Mad Scientists danced around the room hand in hand.

“To have come this far, it’s all due to Shishou’s peerless techniques.”

“No, no. It’s all due to your boundless knowledge and design. Without that we would never have completed it, Zanoba.”

The two were Rudeus and Zanoba.

The two praised each other and stopped dancing.

In the room with the two of them, a dais was set.

It was a stone dais emitting a strange light.

On that dais, a lone girl lay there sleeping completely bare.

“It truly took a long time to make it this far.”

Rudeus thought about all their continuous failures.

The first time they tried to activate it ended in failure.

To complete Prototype Unit No.01 many tens of versions and minor changes were necessary.

As a result, what they got after activation was a golem that could comply with simple commands.
This in itself was something which would be in great demand, but what the two strived for was something much different.

For Prototype Unit No.02 an Artificially Intelligent core and a body closer to a human's were to be developed.

Of course, the failures continued.

The body gradually became more human-like, but to make its movements more human, changing the flesh was very difficult but but tampering with the core to the same end could cause it to fail to activate. To make it as human as possible they had to achieve the perfect balance.

Failures led to more failures.

They re-examined the memoirs of the Eccentric Dragon King Chaos many times over.

They even asked the Armoured Dragon King Pergius for advice and gained insights into magic formations and spirit summoning.

The Dragon God Orsted gave them rare magic stones and knowledge of many materials.

But despite that, the failures continued.

The unreachable domain of the Mad Dragon King. They shed tears at the thought of never touching it.

They failed, shed tears, tried once more, and failed once again.

But each time they failed, they learned something new, slowly making progress.

And finally, one month later.

At last, they had succeeded.

They had succeeded in activating a doll of temporary composition.

The Prototype Unit No.03.

It had no face but without a doubt, it activated.

They were overjoyed at the success.

After taking the Data from the Prototype Unit No.03 they immediately began work on the next unit.

The Prototype Unit No.04

The Prototype Unit No.04 had specs quite close to the finished product. The body and face of a human, lips that moved when it talked and it made full use of its limbs to move freely.

But in actual fact, the two of them hadn't completed all the experiments on the Prototype Unit No.03.

They hadn't examined for all possible flaws.

In their pursuit of their ideal doll and perfect form, they did not have the patience.

And so, they brushed the process aside and began work on the almost complete Prototype Unit No.04.

But that in itself was a good thing.

Everything Prototype Unit No.03 could do Prototype Unit No.04 could too.

They still had to perform the system check on the Prototype Unit No.04 and test its compatibility with the tasks that they would have the finished product undergo.

That was fine, they thought.

This is the next step, they thought.

What we want to see it beyond this, they thought.

This is the Automaton that we want to see, they thought.

"Now then! I'm activating it~!"

"Yeah!"

Zanoba reached out to the magic stone on the girl's modest chest with an excited expression.

Within that magic stone, in the chest of the girl was the core.

The tiny complicated magic formation in the Core was the girl's heart.

After the Core activates, the Doll would stand on its own feet, learn, make its own decisions, and absorb mana with its own power allowing

for semi-permanent activity.
It's was perfect autonomous doll.

Of course if that happens it's possible that it could collapse from mana exhaustion.
But if that happens it would just need to be rested on the platform until all it's magic recovered.

But when Rudeus first proposed that, Zanoba had said:
"If it needs a human to restart it, doesn't that make it incomplete?"

But Rudeus replied to him:
"Of course not, that in itself is perfection.
When people fall and can't get up by themselves, it's by borrowing the hands of others that they can stand once more."

"..."

Zanoba's hand began to hesitate.
Would even he hesitate at having to touch the chest of a small girl?
No, he wasn't someone to have doubts over something like that.

"...Shishou why don't you do it?"
"No, the reason we made it this far was your hard work, you do it."

Zanoba was frightened.
They were about to realise their ideal.
The thing they had been dreaming about for more than 10 years.
But he wasn't originally a timid man.
He was someone unrelated to indecision.

"I understand... Then, I will activate it!"
"Yeah!"

Zanoba's hand slowly reached towards the girl's chest.
Slowly and carefully as if touching something fragile his hand crept

along the girl's skin towards the magic stone.
The mana needed for activation wasn't that large.
It was an amount anyone could provide.

“... 『Awaken, my beloved daughter』 ”

The moment Zanoba said the activation incantation, his mana was
sucked through his finger.
The red light on the platform began to turn blue.
the second he confirmed that, he removed his hand.

“ ... ”

Several seconds passed in silence.
The two men held their breath and watched the girl activate.
The post activation process was automatic.
After the chant and input of the initial mana, all that was left to do was
watch.

“ ... ”

The girl, silently opened her eyes.
She had dark black pupils.
And at the same time, the physical connection to the platform was
severed.

After the connection was severed, the girl slowly sat up.
She had pure white hair.
She was so slender, you would think she didn't have the slightest trace
of muscle.

Her breasts were small but the shape was perfect and her figure was so
beautiful you wouldn't think it belonged to a young girl.
This was the crystallisation of Zanoba and Rudeus's many years of
experience in doll creation and art.

Her body was made of artificial flesh and her bones were of the same strength as the Magic Armour.

The artificial flesh used Rudeus's earth magic clay as a base, mixed with the scales of Red Dragons and Phantom Butterflies that have high magic power and finally, the sap of an Elder Treant and Immortal Race blood. This was the compound that was completed after continuous trial and error with high class materials. While possessing exceptional durability, it also had a feel extremely close to human skin.

What made the body move were magic formations carved into the bones.

These formations cause the artificial flesh to solidify and move like muscle.

The principle was the same as the Magic Armour.

But the joints were made from the powdered bone of Skeleton Deathbreakers.

The bone powder raised the magical conductivity.

Especially high rank skeletons have exceptional conductivity allowing extremely human-like movements.

The girl raised her hands stretched above her head and stretched backwards.

Her expression was human and her movements smooth.

Her overly calm actions that emphasised her chest were brimming with feminine charm.

Gulp

Rudeus swallowed.

"I didn't notice it when we were making it, but those movements are much more dangerous than I realised."

"..."

Zanoba didn't respond.

But you could see on his face that he felt the same.

The girl, still silent, lay back down and raised her knees.

Her young buttocks came up with her knees and she then began to extend them and with her feet still in the air she began to open and close her thighs.¹

The secret place of the doll was exposed in front of the two.

Coincidentally, these movements were not to flaunt her body in an erotic sense.

Upon activation a self check program of joint movement would be initiated.

If the check ended in failure, it would give an error message.

From her own mouth.

“Activation successful.”

Finally, after removing her hair from in front of her face, she proclaimed that it was complete.

The artificial voice was very similar to someone the two knew.

“Haa...”

The two, releasing their tense expressions, breathed a sigh of relief.

They had failed countless times at this step.

Like the time when she raised her arms and her hands flew towards the ceiling like a rocket punch, or when her hip bent at a weird angle, or when her crotch split and it looked like some odd work of art, or when both hands started spinning...

And among the Prototype unit No.03 some simply exploded.

The problem was that the skeleton was the same as the magic armour.

When he had first boarded the Magic Armour, Rudeus had to learn to control its strength.

But that required a large amount of experience in both magic and bodily control.

But a doll has no experience.

And in that case, if it was always using maximum strength it would destroy itself.

Therefore it was necessary to install all kinds of limiters.

But it was still made to the same standard as the Magic armour.

Even with a limiter, the threshold is still high and movement on the level of a Saint Class swordsman is possible.

"It seems like there's no problems."

"Yeah."

As if reacting to their conversation, still lying down, the doll looked at Zanoba with its glassy, inorganic eyes.

And then it spoke.

"Master, what is your name?"

"It's Zanoba!"

"Master Zanoba registered. What are your orders?"

"Please register this man as Sub-Master."

"Understood. What is your name?"

"It's Rudeus."

"Sub-Master Rudeus registered. What are your orders?"

This exchange was something they had repeated countless times with the Prototype Unit No.03.

To first register the Master.

"Well then, if you would please get up off the table and stand on the floor."

The doll got off the table and quickly stood up.

Seeing this, Rudeus clenched his fists.

"Alright, it can properly register Master's names and follow

commands.”

Rudeus was extremely excited looking at the doll.

The first time around, they had experienced major issues.

When he had said “It’s Zanoba” the doll had registered “Master It’s Zanoba”

Or another time when it didn’t move at all not understanding that “If you would please” was the beginning of a command.

They had gotten advice from Pergius to deal with it.

The hint that they had gotten led to all kinds of changes to the magic formation and they had restarted from square one a number of times. And that’s how they had ended up here.

The completed summoning magic formation that was carved into the Core contained all human instinctual responses.

“Jump up and down lightly.”

“Yes Master.”

The doll began jumping up and down with both feet.

Quite a powerful jump.

The artificial flesh had enough power to destroy the skeleton but it seemed like the proper amount of control was in place.

“Keep jumping and raise both hands above your head.”

“Yes Master.”

“Spread your feet apart and... Stop.”

“Yes Master.”

“Now start jumping again while spinning both hands around.”

“Yes Master.”

“Now each time you jump, alternate between opening and closing your legs.”

“Yes Master.”

The doll moves exactly as Zanoba says.

Her hair bounced around her swinging arms.

The balance was also perfect.

“Now make a funny face.”

The doll stopped for a second at Zanoba’s abrupt command.

“Yes Master.”

She hit her cheeks with her hands and her face warped.

From expressionless to odd.

You might not be able to call it funny.

But the doll thought for itself and reached a conclusion.

In other words, exactly what they wanted.

“Hmm, it seems promising.”

“Yeah...”

But Rudeus was frowning.

What he was looking at was her small chest that would occasionally shake and her exquisitely designed nether regions.

I say this for the sake of Rudeus’s honour, but it was not a sexual gaze.

It was something he made himself after all.

But each time it got more complete, he was afraid.

Was it his own talent?

No.

“But it really is similar... The face, and while it might have been an accident, the voice too.”

Then Rudeus looked at the doll’s face.

The doll looked Rudeus in the eye but it didn’t smile.

They had made it to be able to smile, but it probably wouldn’t without an order.

But that wasn’t Rudeus’s problem.

"This is definitely going to make her mad..."

The doll's face resembled someone they knew.

"You mean Nanahoshi?"

Yes, Nanahoshi Shizuka.

Their otherworlder friend sleeping in the sky castle.

The doll resembled her.

Her face, her different length black hair, her figure, and height all resembled Nanahoshi.

A naked doll that resembled their friend.

With sensual breasts and functioning genitals.

"Idiot, I'm talking about Sylphy!"

Right, what he feared was his wife's anger.

"You could tell her that you needed someone to take over for Nanahoshi-dono while she sleeps?"

"Maybe."

Right, they had a reason.

In the case that they find Nanahoshi's friend that was transferred with her.

Although they could simply tell him her name, it would be better to hear it from someone who resembled Nanahoshi.

They had that reason so they made the doll to resemble Nanahoshi.

"The women of your house should also be aware."

"They know we're making an automaton but they don't know that it looks like Nanahoshi."

That said, Rudeus didn't think that making a doll that looked like Nanahoshi would make his wives mad.

They had a proper reason and Nanahoshi herself was also fine with it. If he explained it properly they'd probably accept it.

"The problem is the chest and crotch."

But explaining the fact that a doll of his friend functioned sexually was a different problem.

Thinking that his wives might find out, Rudeus was anxious.

Based on the way he explained it his bed could end up very cold.

Sylphy would end up looking offended and say "Since you went to all the trouble to make it, why don't you just sleep with the doll instead?", or she might just burst into tears and get depressed.

Either way, it wasn't a good thing for Rudeus.

"It wasn't necessary to make it this elaborate."

"You can't say that, with Shishou's masterful techniques you have crafted a magnificent shape. Especially the nipples, they're quite erotic."

"Idiot, after I purposely went out of my way to be vague don't go saying nipple."

"I apologise."

Why had they made the chest and crotch so elaborate.

True, when they were designing the project, they had an ideal.

The ideal of a Dutch wife.²

But at this point they had separated from that ideal.

They should have held themselves back.

It wasn't necessary to make the chest and crotch 18+. It didn't need nipples to make tea..

In the first place, this was merely the Prototype Unit No.04.

There was no reason to make the prototype look like Nanahoshi.

Rudeus got ahead of himself.

"In any case, let's keep this a secret from Sylphy and the others.

"Shishou is whipped after all."

“Please at least call me devoted.”

Currently there weren't many who knew that the doll looked like Nanahoshi.

Orsted, Pergius, and Nanahoshi herself.

Of course, they planned on unveiling it after completion and informing various people.

They had plans to mass-produce them after all.

But if those people involved knew how detailed they had made it, they would probably give them a cold stare.

Roxy might just look at him softly and ask “That doll has a better figure than me doesn't it?”, or maybe just draw away from him with a melancholic look.

Having Roxy draw away from him would leave Rudeus with no other option besides Seppuku.

“Hmm, I can't think that your wives would be as upset as you believe. Everyone is quite aware of how energetic you are.”

“If we were making a normal one I'd think so too, but it's just because it looks like Nanahoshi I can't help but feel trouble coming.”

Rudeus, while nodding to himself, poked the doll's chest.

It was a slightly different sensation to that of a human but it was still extremely soft.

If he hadn't made it himself, he would get quite excited.

That excitement might be considered cheating.

If Eris found Rudeus cheating she would probably give a “Hmph” with her mouth in the shape of a \sim and after removing the fist she lodged in his nether regions, push him down and climb on.

To make sure he would never cheat again, she would completely make Rudeus her's.

Although, this wouldn't necessarily be something Rudeus would hate.

“...”

Incidentally, the doll had carefully watched the finger that poked it, but hadn't given any other reaction.

It was simply the sensation of being touched.

They hadn't inputted the sensation of sexual pleasure.

If Elinalise or Ariel had been more deeply involved in the production process, it might have turned out that way, but the two were currently engrossed in child rearing.

"Well then, shall we scrap it now?"

As he said that, his face darkened.

To Zanoba, scrapping a doll was not something enjoyable.

No matter the doll.

"...No! This one in itself is complete to a certain degree. Scrapping it would be a waste."

Rudeus folded his arms and began to think.

Worst case scenario, they would scrap this one and begin work on the next model.

Exchanging just the crotch and chest would be impossible with their current technology,

They would need to think about it for the mass production model, but currently it was a unique item.

"We need to think about what to do in case someone finds out..."

"Nobody will know. Isn't that why we're doing our research all the way out here?"

"Yeah, I guess."

They were currently in the Fittoa region of the Asura Empire.

They had borrowed a section of land in the Fittoa restoration zone from the Boreas house and built a research lab.

There weren't many who knew its location

"It doesn't matter to you. If we get found out, no one's going to get very mad at you."

"No, I told you about it before, but recently, Julie has been getting angry at me."

"Ahh, right, that's true."

Even Julie who was supposedly working on the project with them didn't know about the lab.

She had helped out with the artificial flesh and the skeleton but she didn't know how they were being used.

She was cut off.

That is to say, lately, whenever Zanoba brings back any kind of erotic doll, Julie would get obviously displeased.

Although she wouldn't go as far as to destroy them, there were times when she would move them out of sight.

There was no helping it.

Although she had long since grown up, age wise she was at that time... Adolescence.

The two knew that a growing girl had a rather fragile spirit.

"But isn't it possible that Julie could find the transfer magic formation in the basement?"

The magic formation leading to the lab was in the basement of Zanoba's workshop.

If Julie were to go into the basement, stumble on the magic circle and decide to activate it out of curiosity...

She would witness the naked automaton girl.

It would probably be rather shocking.

"I made sure to lock the door from behind and I have the only key."

"Julie could easily get past that. I taught her how to open locks with earth magic after all."

"No, Julie wouldn't open a door I locked myself. She has promised

that.”

“Good.”

Julie and Zanoba were still master and servant after all.
Julie understood that there was a line she shouldn't cross.

“Let's get back on track. What should we do about this?”

Rudeus again began to fold his arms and think.
Thinking about it, besides the nipples and crotch, the rest was all fine.
And besides, this was the Prototype Unit No.04. If they were to dispose of it, taking all its data wouldn't take too long.

“Alright, although it's a waste, let's take the data from it and scrap it.”

Rudeus reached a conclusion.
Ruseus had decided to go through it but Zanoba was still hesitant.
It had taken quite a large amount of time and money to make and they still hadn't completed the experiments that they had to do on the Prototype Unit No.03
Destroying it just because the nipples were erotic was too much of a waste.

It was then, a light bulb suddenly popped above Zanoba's head.

“Wait, Shihou!”

“What?”

“We can just put clothes on it!”

“Hm? Hah! Right! We can just do that!”

At Zanoba's suggestion, Rudeus also realised.
As long as no one can see it, there's no problem.
With clothes on, the erotic parts would be hidden.
As long as they weren't a rapist, no one would suddenly tear off its clothes.
Meaning that as long as they didn't tell anyone it would be fine.

"Alright, wait here a minute."

Rudeus said that and rushed into the next room.

There were the clothes he had prepared in advance.

A thick beige dress, the kind you wouldn't see often in the Magic City Sharia.

And also a bra and panties.

Of course, brand new.

They had originally planned to clothe the doll.

The two had completely forgotten about it and simply trembled at the frightening seductive power of the naked girl.

"Alright, put on these clothes."

"Yes Master."

"After that, lie back down on the platform."

"Yes Master."

After the doll put on the clothes Rudeus gave it, it went and lay back down on the dias.

For the time being, now that it had clothes on, the dangerous sexual aura had disappeared.

It was now simply a girl who looked like Nanahoshi lying still.

There was no immorality at all.

Although the fact that it didn't blink was somewhat unnerving...

But like this, it seemed like all their problems had been solved.

"I'm kind of tired now. It's a bit early but let's leave it at this for tonight."

"Sure."

After deciding what to do next, Rudeus sat down.

They didn't end up conducting extensive experiments but the outcome looked good.

There was no need to rush, they could teach it all kinds of things tomorrow.

Rudeus clapped his hands together and stood up.

“Tonight we celebrate! Our plan has taken a great step forward.”

“Of course! Since I thought you would say that, I had planned something in advance. Over here!”

Zanoba picked up a barrel that was sitting in the corner of the room. After carrying it to the middle of the room he broke the top open with his fist.

It gave off a large bang and a little spilled out.

“Well aren’t you well prepared!”

Zanoba grabbed cups he had also put together and scooped some out from the barrel.

The cup was filled a translucent violet liquid.

It was the wine of the Asura Empire.

“Oh, do we have anything to eat?”

“All we have is preserved stuff.”

“That’ll do.”

After collecting a mountain food from the cellar, the two began filling their cups.

They raised their cups into the air in a toast.

“To the advancement of the doll project!”

“To our dream!”

“Cheers!”

And the merrymaking began.

“But still, what should we teach it?”

“Since we’ve already confirmed that it can complete simple tasks, we should see just how adaptable it is and test the extent of its independent thought.”

“There’s a whole heap of things to look into. Let’s just get through whatever we can.”

The two were discussing their future plans while drinking.

After it had successfully activated they didn’t make it do anything considerable.

But it did manage to skillfully interpret a vague order

She had the fundamental knowledge of the earlier models and would continue learning by herself.

But they still didn’t know just how far it’s intellect would stretch.

Like the extent of what it could learn or things it couldn’t do.

Or how far it could think for itself and make it’s own decisions.

“Leave it to me. I’ll take responsibility and teach it all kinds of things.”

“Don’t go teaching it anything you shouldn’t.”

“I would return those words right back at you.”

“That’s rich coming from you.”

“Hahahahaha.”

The two were drinking merrily and thinking about what to do next.

But then Zanoba changed the conversation topic.

“Right, the 『byproducts』 that you made have been selling well too.”

“We did end up making all kinds of other things in the middle of research. Have you been selling them at the store?”

“The frog bag is particularly popular.”

“Oh really...”

To get the proper consistency of human skin, Rudeus tried all different kinds of combinations.

Among them was the cheek pouch of the Rain Force Frog. It was extremely long and thin but also very durable.

He had originally thought to use that to make the skin.

In the end they decided to look for something different to use and made something else from it.

That was...

C o n d o m
“The contraceptive³ is it.”

“Luke-dono is especially pleased with it. He created a factory to produce them in Asura.”

“Asuran nobles really do like that kind of thing...”

“Although you say that, you use it too don't you?”

“Well yeah.”

Yes, Rudeus used them too.

Almost every night.

After his third and fourth daughters Lily and Christina were born there was a silent agreement that the next child to be born would be Sylphy's. Sylphy became the centre, so the nights he spent with Eris and Roxy decreased.

But because the Elves weren't very fertile, she wasn't able to conceive a third time.

The fact that Sieg and Lucy were able to be born might simply have been good timing or maybe god was bullying them...

They didn't know, but when their turns began to decrease Eris and Roxy got restless.

Compared to before, Eris's desire had settled down but she was still quite lascivious.

The gleam in her eyes was like a wild beast.

But if Rudeus would accompany her, she might end up pregnant.

And that's where the condom comes in.

If it was used, the wild Eris could be satisfied and there would be no child.

Seeing Eris who was currently bearing her third child, Sylphy didn't look upset, nor was the atmosphere of the house strained.

It was somewhat of a godsend.

"...Well, you know, it's not too good for the amount of children to increase if the number of people to look after them doesn't as well."

"You could just employ a maid."

"If I hired a maid, she wouldn't look after me too. Six people is just too many."

"Hahaha... That's just like you Shishou."

Zanoba laughed.

Seeing that Rudeus suddenly thought of something.

The question everyone was always thinking of asking.

"Right, what do you think of Julie?"

"In what way?"

"Like, as a second wife?"

"With Julie?"

"Well there is her age, and her status is quite low... But you don't consider yourself royalty anymore right? It's not a bad idea right? Being surrounded by kids, praising them, sometimes having to scold them."

Zanoba listened and then firmly shook his head.

"I won't get married to her."

"...Right."

Hearing his firm reply Rudeus decided to let it go.

Everybody had a line that couldn't be crossed.

It didn't seem like he was saying that simply because he didn't want to marry her.

There were plenty of reasons like his status as royalty, the fact that he

was already married or the younger brother that he had killed, or Pax.

"It's nothing major. Would you like to hear it?"

"If you're willing to tell."

"I'm a Miko and in exchange for my super human strength, my skin doesn't have much feeling."

"Meaning?"

"The inside of a woman is too soft, there is not enough stimulation."

Hearing that Rudeus was shocked.

It was a juicy story.

But he also understood.

Like the reason why Zanoba would use bronze for statues whenever he could.

"Of course, that's not the only reason.

There's also other things like Pax and Julius.

But the fact that it would cause my partner pain to be able to produce children is the main reason."

"I see... But still, if the opportunity comes, you should ask Julie about it. It's fine if you don't have kids... There's also the option of adoption after all."

Rudeus was so vague because he already had six children himself.

"Haha, I guess you're right."

Hearing Zanoba's feeble laugh Rudeus decided that he should stay away from marriage and changed the topic.

Now was the time to celebrate.

They should be happily drinking.

"Let's leave the rubber aside! What about the others? Are they selling?"

"The others are doing alright. They're being treated like oddities, some of them have made it into eccentric's collections."

"I thought they were pretty convenient... Aisha was super happy about

the vacuum cleaner.”

Rudeus’s byproducts were quite diverse.

Using magic formations to make all kinds of things like a fan or vacuum, waterproofing or a fridge.

Rudeus’s inventions were quite convenient but not many were widespread.

Mostly because although the magic wasn’t too hard to reproduce, the materials involved inflated the cost.

It’s possible that further research could lower the prices but that was in a different direction to their goal.

“They are convenient, but Asura and Millis both have magic tools to the same effect, so simply hiring a servant to operate them is easier.”

“I was thinking more about decreasing the servants work though”

Rudeus took a swig and sighed.

Even though Rudeus had lived happily here for years he still couldn’t forget the sensations of his past life.

“Well as long as the technology remains, it’s always possible that one day, someone else will put it to use so let’s at least leave behind how we made it.”

“Yeah, that sounds good. I’m sure that some time in the future, someone will succeed your will Shishou. They might think you’ve written some kind of phantom scripture.”

“I will name it ‘The Rudeus Anthology’”

“Haha, future magicians would never even dream that the grimoire written by the man called the Right Hand of the Dragon God would contain household appliances.”

The two were conversing and drinking happily.

Their faces slowly got red.

A whole barrel was a bit much for the two of them.

“It’s a shame that Cliff and Lord Badi aren’t here.”

“...Cliff-dono definitely wouldn’t approve of such an immoral doll.”

“Let’s call him after the next step. We could even have the toast at Cliff’s house in Millis.”

“Let us do that! Ohh, of course! After we put the finishing touches on this prototype, let us present the Automaton Model No.01 to Cliff-dono.”

“That sounds great! Ah, but if we do that, the girl type would be a bad idea... let’s make it a boy.”

“A boy would also be a good thing.”

“Oh, has this sparked his Majesty Zanoba’s curiosity?”

“I have no interest in homosexuality, I simply understand the merits of a doll in the shape of a young boy. Do you not Shihou?”

“I get it. Even if Sylphy was a boy, I’d still get it.”

“Hahaha, that’s just like you Shishou!”

As their celebration began to liven up, the two also got quite drunk on their everlasting liquor.

And because the two old friends were engrossed in their drinks and research....

“Alright, the next one will be a boy model. Let’s try our best to make a young boy good looking enough to make cliff jealous.”

“Haha, Ahahahah!”

...The two didn’t notice.

That their festivities were being closely watched.

And that the contents of their merry conversation was being listened to.

That person was sneering in laughter.

“Uugh... My head hurts.”

The next day.

Rudeus began to detox the pain in his head and got up.

Looking outside the window, the storm had blown over and a cloudless sky opened up before him.

"It's already noon... I must have drank too much."

But, for some reason, drinking together as men was too good.
Celebratory drinks especially.

Yesterday they were bewildered at the dolls shamelessness, but that was another thing.

Now that the Prototype was complete, the next step would be the fun part.

The dream before them. Their overflowing hope. Their bursting love.

Thinking those kinds of things, Rudeus looked towards the doll's face and...

"...Wha?"

It wasn't there.

The doll wasn't on the dais.

All he could see was an empty platform.

"Wait a second, huh? What? Umm, Zanoba~? What'd you do with the doll~?"

Zanoba had probably woken up before him and gone to teach it.

Thinking that, he began to look around.

He then saw wrapped in a blanket in the corner of the room, Zanoba just waking up.

"Hmm~... Shishou, the doll is still suspended on the dais isn't it."

"Suspended?"

Rudeus suddenly remembered.

After they had put clothes on it they had definitely put it to sleep on the dais.

There was no doubt that they had put it asleep.

“.....Did we suspend it?”

But to properly suspend it, it was necessary to give it the order to shut down.

You had to place your hand on the magic stone and recite the chant. They hadn't done that.

“S-Search!”

“U-Understood!”

The two began to search for the doll in a panic.

But they couldn't find it anywhere.

Not in the lab or anywhere else.

The doll had disappeared.

Chapter 11: The Day The Doll Walked - Second Part

That day, Elinalise was out shopping.

Hand in hand with her son Clive.

Elinalise had already birthed and raised many children but holding hands and going out with her own child was still fun.

Especially with Clive who looked so similar to his father.

His hair and his lips both resembled Cliff.

And although she had no basis, the way he thought himself the best was exactly like him too.

Remembering how Cliff had looked when they had first met, Elinalise began to drool... *Ahem* smile happily.

"Okaa-san, pumpkin! Buy the pumpkin! The pumpkin!"

"Hmm, you're right. Pumpkin is quite delicious this season..."

"Not like that! If you eat pumpkin you know, you grow taller!"

"Who taught you that?"

"Lucy-chan!"

Elinalise's son Clive was a pretty boy.

Especially his eyes and features were quite like Elinalise, there was no doubt that he'd be popular with both human and elf girls in the future. But unfortunately he got his stature from his father and was quite short. Clive had quite a complex about it and at home he would talk about how he wanted to get taller all the time.

"I wonder why you want to get taller so much?"

"It's a secret!"

Clive's face got a little red as he said that.

But Elinalise already knew the reason.

It was Lucy.

Clive was in love with Lucy who was two years his senior.

He wanted to get taller so that Lucy would think he was cool.

"Hmm?"

It was then that Elinalise's long ears picked up a familiar voice.

(Oioi, Isn't it common sense when you get something from someone to give something back huh?)

(I wanna know what kinda voice you'll make for us girlie.)

The voice was coming from a back alley behind a bar.

Looking into it, you could see a girl being held by two men.

They were someone Elinalise recognised.

And for a change, this time it was the girl that she knew.

"By voice do you mean like this?"

"You'd think so right? But people can make a much better sound you know?"

"Come on, come to the inn with us and let's have a listen? It's cool right? Let's go."

The woman didn't seem like she was completely against it. But as far as Elinalise knew, she wasn't that fond of this kind of invitation.

What she wasn't showing on her face is that she was troubled.

"Hey, cut it out."

Elinalise, shopping bag still in hand called out to them. The men immediately turned to look.

"Huh? What's your problem?"

"That girl is a friend of Rudeus. Go find someone else to hit on."

The two men turned their lustful eyes towards Elinalise.

"By someone else... Missie, how about you?"

"Eeh, to say that in front of my little brother? How dirty."

"Your brother? You flatter yourself."

Elinalise had an embarrassed smile and a hand on her face. From their joking attitude she could already tell they were outsiders. Most likely traveling adventures. If they were from around here, there's no way they would still be here after hearing Rudeus's name.

"Who are you... Hmm?"

In front of her appeared Clive red in the face.

With a tree branch he had picked up in hand.

"Dont touch my mother!"

"Clive, I appreciate the thought, but you mother can handle people of this level no problem. Get back."

"Waaa..."

Elinalise lifted Clive up and placed him behind her back.

Elinalise reminded herself to praise Clive later and drew her sword.

"This level? Even though the two of us are A rank?"

"Hmm... Impressive at that age, you two must have some amount of talent."

"Haha, you sure are composed. You must have some confidence in your skills."

"No, unfortunately I'm simply mediocre."

The two men drew their swords.

They looked very familiar with them.

Elinalise carried her sword around for self defence, but unfortunately she didn't have her shield.

Considering the opponent's strength, 2 vs 1 was not in her favour.

"Rest assured, after I teach you a lesson, I'll show you a good time."

Elinalise returned her sword to its sheath.

The two had looked somewhat scared before, but now they were looking towards Elinalise with lustful eyes.

After seeing the two sepearate from the girl, Elinalise took a deep breath.

"KYAAAAAA! HELP!! KIDNAPPERS!!! AAAHH!"

A scream echoed through the alley.

The loud noise startled the two.

"Wha!"

"W-we aren't kidnappers...!"

But Elinalise's voice continued ring out.

Once Elinalise could see that no one was coming from the empty path, the back alley fell silent.

"...Heh, trying to give us a fright. There's no way anybody would be coming. We're behind a bar in the middle of the day."

"I'll let you scream as much as you like on the bed..."

But then.

Doors all around began to open one after the other.

And out came men.

Groups of wild men, all in jet black coats.

On their backs was a yellow crest that somewhat resembled a tiger.

They were the Rudo Mercenary corp.

As part of their work, they helped carry in the alcohol that the bars planned to sell that night.

"Elinalise Anego!"¹

"Who the hell do you bastards think you're laying your hands on!"

"You assholes pickin' a fight with the Rudo Mercenaries!?"

"You wanna go! We'll take you!"

Those normally courteous young men who would protect the peace, when dealing with outlaws or those that hurt others, would become quite ill mannered.

And on top of that, there were more than 10 people heading towards them.

If it was Rudeus he would have apologised the second he saw them trying to intimidate him.

No, Rudeus would probably have apologised the second he saw the doors open.

".....W-We apologise!"

"We were ignorant of your greatness... We have only arrived today."

It took longer than two seconds for the men to throw away their swords and apologise.

Congratulations, Rudeus's honour has been upheld.

Rudeus isn't a coward or a chicken after all.

Yes, if a large number of wild men come out of a building, anyone would apologise.

"Anego, what should we do?"

"They haven't done anything yet, so let's let them off with a warning. Take them somewhere nearby and teach them a lesson."

"Yes ma'am! Alright then, you lot, come over here!"

"No, but we... um..."

"I said get over here!"

"Umm, I have somewhere I have to be..."

"You can afford to miss it!"

After confirming that the adventurers had been dragged into the bar, Elinalise walked up to the girl.

"Nanahoshi, it's been a while... Was it already the day you were supposed to wake?"

The girl was Nanahoshi.

The expressionless girl nodded.

"I awoke last night."

"Is that so... Well talking here would be dull. Let's hurry on."

Elinalise said that and took Nanahoshi's hand.

It was then she felt something was off.

"Oh, Nanahoshi, when did you cut your hair?"

As far as Elinalise could remember, Nanahoshi had long hair.
But now it was cut to around the nape of her neck.
Elinalise was puzzled.

The girl called Nanahoshi pursed her lips and smiled.
It was a somewhat distorted smile.
It was a troubled smile, as if hiding something hard to say, or perhaps plotting something...
Seeing that, Elinalise, with her wealth of experience, guessed something.

"There seems to be some reason... If you're fine with me, I wouldn't mind listening. Are you free?"

"I currently have no important tasks."

"Well then, how about we head to that cafe?"

Elinalise took the hand of a slightly sullen Clive and picked up her shopping.

"Clive? Oh, what are you so annoyed about? What? Are you sad you couldn't protect your mother? Go tell that to the girl you like, not your mother... Nanahoshi, what do you want to do? Are you coming along?"

And as told, Nanahoshi followed her to the Cafe.

"In any case, that was rather dangerous. I'm glad it was behind that bar so that help could come quickly."

A few minutes ago, the two had entered the cafe.
They had ordered the same fruit juice.
Nanahoshi had imitated Elinalise's order.
Incidentally, in front of Clive was a somewhat fancy dessert.
Lately sugar had been appearing rather cheap on the market so people had been using it to make preserved fruits.

It seemed to be Nanahoshi's first time in the cafe as she was looking rather curiously.

"So, what happened?"

"There have been numerous occurrences, it is difficult to choose a single one. Please refine the question."

"...Did you always talk like that?"

Elinalise was puzzled, but she knew that going through hard times could often change the way people speak.

If a person changes so does their outlook.

"Then please tell me everything from the beginning."

"From the beginning?"

"Yes, from the very start."

Nanahoshi blinked twice and began talking.

"I awoke on the dais. When I awoke Zanoba-sama and Rudeus-sama came up to me."

"Oh, intruding on a lady's room, what am I to do with those two."

"The two of them, seeing me without clothes, looked exceedingly happy."

"Huh...?"

"After that the two of them touched my limbs and exposed chest, proceeding to check every corner of my body. After that they began to argue whether or not they would use me. After they were satisfied with me, they came to the conclusion to dispose of me and proceeded to put me to sleep on the dais and then proceeded to sleep themselves."

Elinalise's thoughts stopped for a moment.

The image she had in her head was of Rudeus and Zanoba stripping a sleeping Nanahoshi with vulgar looks on their faces, waking her up and forcing themselves onto her.

Having seen those kinds of men plenty of times, Elinalise could imagine

it quite easily.

"A-and you didn't resist?"

"Resistance was meaningless."

"True, they are Rudeus and Zanoba... Was Pergius-sama not present?"

"It was only the two of them."

Elinalise didn't know much about Pergius's personality.

But she did know that Pergius wasn't in his castle all the time.

"W-was this the first time?"

"Yes. But Rudeus-sama and Zanoba-sama had planned this for some time, it seemed like they had preparations in place"

"Are you saying it's possible they have been aiming for you since way back?"

For them it would be simple to know when Pergius would be out.

And be extension, when such a day would line up with when Nanahoshi would awake.

"..."

Elinalise was a calm woman.

She was a woman who, due to her vast experiences, had the composure to remain calm in a situation such as this.

But to her, being betrayed by those she trusted was quite shaking.

But how could Rudeus...

Putting aside the unpopular Zanoba,

Rudeus was surrounded by his children and wives who both loved him and he loved back.

The man who put his life on the line and fought Orsted for the sake of his family.

Rudeus who does all kinds of things with Sylphy and Roxy at night.

Rudeus who had Eris do all kinds of things to him at night.

How could he... To Nanahoshi...

She who was frantically searching for a way to return to her homeland.

There was a part of her that thought that it was impossible.

That it was some kind of mistake.

Rudeus had been sincerely helping her.

Much to Sylphy's jealousy he continued to help Nanahoshi.

He went to the Magic Continent and fought the Demon Lord Atofe to save her.

But just looking at Nanahoshi's expression.

Removing the uneasy smile from before, she was constantly completely expressionless, like a doll.

She neither smiled nor cried

Even her hair was now short. Only barely up to her shoulders.

The hair that she had looked after so carefully.

It was now somewhat dried.

Elinalise wasn't especially close to Nanahoshi.

But she had still known her for quite some time.

And over that time she had gotten to know what kind of expressions she made.

She had never seen Nanahoshi so shocked before.

Nanahoshi couldn't possibly be making it up.

She couldn't tell what was the truth.

It could be a trap by someone to try and take down Rudeus or Zanoba.

Right.

There were all kinds of magic tools to change one's appearance.

That said, to use it, one would have to infiltrate deep into the Sky Castle.

It would be impossible to imitate Nanahoshi.

The only people capable of that would be those who knew Perguis's schedule to some extent and could determine when the Sky Castle would be mostly empty.

There weren't many people who fit that.

She was confused.

She was flustered to an extent that she had never felt in these last few years.

What should she do. What was the truth.

She knew only one thing.

"It must have been hard."

Elinalise stood up and moved next to Nanahoshi and embraced her tightly.

What she knew was that the the girl in front of her carried a scar on her heart.

"Elinalise-sama, the conversation isn't..."

"It's fine, I've heard enough.

You had to talk about something difficult.

I don't quite believe it but... Mmm.

Betraying someone's trust is unforgivable. I will properly punish Rudeus."

Therefore Elinalise put off finding the truth for now and decided to comfort Nanahoshi.

"Has Rudeus committed some kind of crime?"

"Yes, a terribly hateful crime."

"What would that be."

"He hurt you. No, not just you. Depending on how they feel, he could have also hurt his wives... Sylphy, Roxy, and Eris."

"I am uninjured."

"No, they have hurt your heart."

"Heart..."

Elinalise suddenly felt something odd while holding Nanahoshi.

She somehow knew something was off around her heart.

Elinalise often held people in her arms so she could tell.

She had never felt someone chest that felt like this.

There was no tangible sense of discomfort, but there was almost

something inhuman about it.

"Found it!"

A loud voice rang out in the previously quiet cafe.

Looking at the entrance, you could see a man in a grey coloured robe pointing towards Elinalise's group.

It was Rudeus.

Following behind him was Zanoba.

It wasn't just the two of them, they were also with some of the Rudo Mercenaries.

"Catch it!"

Hearing Rudeus's shout, Elinalise strengthened her hold on the girl and right before she was about to shout back at him to wait a minute...

The person within her arms moved.

The girl shook off Elinalise's arms with strength she didn't think possible, and with unbelievable speed she flipped the table and jumped towards an open window.

Nanahoshi's figure had disappeared.

With tremendous speed.

Speed on the level of a Saint Class Swordsman.

Nobody present could follow.

The Rudo Mercenaries were also taken aback.

"Boss, Zanoba-sama... It's too fast. We can't keep up with that."

"It's true. That's the automaton that Shishou created. The average swordsman can't compare to it in speed or power."

"Don't go praising it now... For the time being, it doesn't seem like it's capable of acting in secret yet, let's spread out and search. As long as we

know where it is, Zanoba and I will do something about it."

Rudeus issued instructions with tired look and walked up to Elinalise. He stroked the head of the bewildered Clive who was still clutching his fork and confirmed that he was unharmed. He walked towards Elinalise and extended a hand.

"I'm sorry about that Elinalise. Are you alright? Did it do anything to you?"

"...No, I'm fine."

Elinalise gripped his hand and stood up.

"So just what happened?"

"Well there isn't much to tell..."

After witnessing what just happened, Elinalise felt relieved.

She was misunderstanding something after all.

Eris's job in the house was taking Leo and the children on walks. Of course, she would also teach the children swordsmanship, she also had a class at the school.

But when it came to 『Household Jobs』 Eris only had walks.

As long as there was nothing pressing, they would head out early afternoon.

Of course, taking everyone out would be dangerous so she at most took 2~3 people.

When Leo would go out for a walk, Lara would get on his back as if it was natural so she would really only be taking one or two people.

Today, Lara and Sieg were riding on Leo's back and the still young Lilly was on Eris's shoulders.

And so, walking around the town and letting the children play

somewhere suitable was Eris's daily routine.

Just a little while ago it was only Lucy, Lara, Ars, and sometimes Clive. Back then Lara would often have her hair pulled by the boys of the neighbourhood until Lucy would stop them.

But lately because of Eris's training, Lara has been able to fight back.

When Eris had turned away for a second Lara was standing with a cut on her face and a bleeding nose.

Nearby were the boys she had fought with crouching down and crying.

Lara and Eris's eyes met and still expressionless she thrust out her fingers in a V declaring her triumph.

When Eris saw that she was somewhat troubled.

When she was younger she often got into fights was scolded for it.

A nobleman's daughter shouldn't be getting into fights, if someone says something to you, you return it with words, or so they'd say to her.

She wondered if she should scold Lara.

But she ended up praising her.

Lara didn't speak very much.

That shy girl standing up for herself was something to be proud of.

"Good job", "As expected of my daughter", was the kind of thing she said.

Of course, if Sieg or one the others had made someone obviously weaker than them cry, she would get mad.

She'd spank them until their behind was red.

But those boys were older and bigger than Lara.

And so Eris thought to herself that complementing her was right after all.

Thinking that Lara would be going to school next year, giving her nothing but praise might not be so good, but Eris didn't think that far ahead.

That said, today they weren't at the usual park, they were heading

somewhere different.

There probably wouldn't be any fighting.

There wasn't any meaning to it, just a whim.

"Don't go too far from the bank!"

Today they had come to the river to play.

Lara and Sieg had taken off their clothes and jumped in with Leo.

Eris was watching Lilly.

Lately she had begun to toddle around.

Maybe because the river excited her, she walked up to it nervously and put her hand in and shrieked at the cold and ran into Eris's arms; she had already repeated it a number of times.

"Kyaa! Mama! Mama!"

"What is it? Is the water scary?"

"Cold!"

Hearing her half-baked answer, Eris let a smile slip and pet Lilly's head.

Lilly and Lara looked quite alike but Lara was somewhat more docile.

But Lilly was much more investigative than Lara. Whenever she found something, she would be exceedingly curious.

Just then, it looked like Lilly found something.

"Mama! Sparkles!"

"...Sparkles?"

"It's sparkling!"

Looking where she was pointing, beyond the shining surface of the river, something else was sparkling.

A fish.

A small fish about the size of a finger was swimming around.

"It's a fish."²

"Annoying!"

"Not annoying. A fish. Try saying it. Fi-sh."

"FISH! Mama, come on, catch it! Catch the fish!"

"Yes yes... Let me see it."

Eris rolled up her sleeves and looked in the river.

After a few seconds there was a splash.

And suddenly the fish was in Eris's hand.

The fish had no idea what happened and simply moved its mouth bewildered.

"Here."

"Yay! Yay!"

Eris gave the fish to Lilly.

The fish then seems to realise the danger it was in and suddenly began to flop around.

It jumped off Lilly's hand and fell back in the river.

"It got away..."

"Huhu, it thinks it can... Hm?"

But in the middle of their exchange Eris sensed a presence.

"...Something's coming."

Something was heading towards them from the city.

Quite fast.

It would have to be Rudeus wearing the magic armour 『MK.2 revised』 or something of the same level.

"Leo. Go get the two of them! Have them put their clothes on too."

Hearing Eris's shout, Leo barked and began to push Lara back up the bank.

Lara was unaffected.

She probably already knew what was going on from talking to Leo.

Sieg grumbled that he still wanted to play but Lara grabbed his hand and they climbed out of the river and began to dry themselves.

"Lara, help Sieg put his clothes on!"

Sieg had only recently been able to put on his own clothes. Doing up a single button was quite slow and without help, he'd take quite a while.

Eris was somewhat impatient. She didn't feel any hostility from whatever was approaching but it was a bit too fast to grab the children and run.

Even if it was an enemy, she could probably win, but it would be better to have the children run.

The three children would run on Leo's back and she would confront the enemy.

Orsted's office was also close by.

The place where both The North God Kalman III and The Dragon God Orsted were staying.

There was no doubt that they would be safe there but...

"...Huh, what?"

But seeing what was approaching, Eris let out a confused sound. Because it was a face she knew.

A girl with black hair.
Nanahoshi.

"If it isn't Nanahoshi."

Nanahoshi was about to keep running right through but hearing her name, she suddenly stopped.

"Good morning. I apologise but may I inquire as to what your name is?"

"It's Eris. What, did you forget?"

"Eris-sama. I have committed it to memory."

Eris felt something was off.

Her hair was short, she was extremely fast, and her speech was different. But Eris hadn't known Nanahoshi a particularly long time, she probably just thought that this kind of thing happens sometimes.

Well, Eris never was someone to worry about the small things.

"What's up, you're running real fast, are you chasing someone?"

"Yes... No, correction. I am running away."

Nanahoshi looked behind her and answered as such.

Behind her was an empty plain.

"Mama! Mama! Amazing!"

Seeing Nanahoshi's speed, Lilly walked up to her.

She was poking Nanahoshi's leg with a sparkle in her eye.

"Kyaa!"

Nanahoshi lifted her up from under her arms and Lilly let out a happy cry and laughed.

"Good morning."

"Haha!"

Lilly was grabbing Nanahoshi's hair and rubbing her face.

Eris didn't know why Lilly and Nanahoshi were so close but thinking that Lilly was being somewhat rude, she took Lilly from Nanahoshi and put her on her shoulders.

"Yaa~. Mama, can I have it?"

"No. That's rude."

Lilly sounded disappointed but Eris didn't put her down.
Seeing that, Nanahoshi grabbed a bunch of her hair.

"Do you want this?"
"...Yeah."

Seeing Lilly's restrained nod, Nanahoshi tore off a few strands and handed them to Lilly.

"Here."
"Yaay!"

Lilly took it and her face lit up again.
Eris didn't know why Lilly was so happy... But for now she reasoned that black hair was quite uncommon.

"Eris-sama, may I ask a question?"

Nanahoshi then looked at Eris and asked that.

"What is it?"
"Eris-sama is Rudeus-sama's wife 'Eris-sama' correct?"
"That's right."

Being called his wife, Eris puffed up her chest in pride and answered.
Hearing it from someone else, she was definitely proud.
Having given birth to the eldest son, and looking after the children like she was, she was most definitely confident that she was his wife.

"Eris-sama, would you knowing of my existence cause you to be angry at Rudeus-sama?"
"Existence...? I wouldn't get mad just from you being around."

Although she didn't know the reasoning behind the question, Eris still answered.
Nanahoshi was Rudeus's friend. She wouldn't get mad from them

talking.

If he laid his hands on her, or asked to make her his fourth wife, she'd probably be a little mad though...

"Then what about Sylphy-sama or Roxy-sama?"

"I don't think they'd get that mad... Oh but maybe..."

Eris remembered something Sylphy once said.

"Sylphy once said that she just couldn't agree to Nanahoshi being around."

"Agree you say? What kind of agreement would that be?"

"I don't know. But that girl truly does love Rudeus so it probably has something to do with her feelings."

Eris had no hesitation in saying that she loved Rudeus but even she had to concede to Sylphy's dedication.

Sylphy would end her own life if it was for Rudeus's sake.

Of course, Eris was also prepared to die fighting to protect Rudeus.

But that was something she wanted to do.

With the things that she absolutely didn't want to do, she probably wouldn't be able to hold out.

Even if it was for Rudeus.

But Sylphy would. She would hold out for Rudeus.

Eris had to yield to that part of Sylphy.

"Understood. I would like to talk to Sylphy-sama. Do you know where she might be?"

"She should be at home today."

"Very well. I thank you for answering my questions."

Nanahoshi's mouth warped into a smile as she bowed and she turned around and began walking towards the town.

"I wonder what all that was about."

Eris folded her arms, put her feet shoulder width apart and let out a 'hmp' from her nose.

It was the pose that Ars had often been imitating.

"...Mama."

Eris turned around and saw blue and green hair peeking out of Leo's back.

It was Lara and Sieg.

Thinking back, even though someone they knew came along, the two hadn't said hello.

That was something rare.

Normally Leo would take the initiative to walk up to people and they would greet them, but this time Leo had remained in the back the whole time.

But right when Eris thought that, Lara answered her question.

"...That person wasn't Nanahoshi."

Hearing that, Eris remembered her unease and her face stiffened.

On her shoulders, the hair that came from Nanahoshi that Lilly was holding suddenly stiffened and straightened out.

"....."

She didn't know the cause of her unease but she knew she should hurry home.

But then she remembered the children and changed her thoughts.

"We're heading to the office now. You two get on Leo."

For now, she'd take the children somewhere safe and then head home. She helped the kids onto Leo's back and began towards the office.

When Eris arrived at the office the atmosphere was quite heavy.
She also recognised the large number of Rudo Mercenaries gathering outside.

And it wasn't just them, Zanoba and Julie, Elinalise and Clive, and the North God Kalman III Alexander were all there too.

But the normal unpleasant aura was gone.
It seemed that Orsted was out.

"Eris! Why are you here!?"

And then, Rudeus walked out from the group.
Eris was relieved upon seeing him.
And at the same time, confirmed that her unease from before wasn't imagined.

"I ran into someone strange on our walk."

Hearing Eris's answer, a danger could be seen in Rudeus's eyes.

"What kind of person?"

"They looked like Nanahoshi."

Rudeus immediately looked like he wanted to ask something.
Like were they were or what happened.
But more so, was concern for the person in front of him.

"I see... So, did they do anything to you? Nobody was injured right?"
"The children are fine."

Rudeus looked worriedly at the kids.
Lara, Sieg, and Lilly, playing with her hair.

"What about you? You're not hurt or anything?"

After confirming that the children were unhurt, Rudeus began to confirm that Eris didn't have any wounds. Searching her from head to toe, touching her face, turning her around by the shoulders, and right about the time Rudeus's hands reached her breasts a fist landed in his chin.

"I'm fine! Can you not understand that much by looking!"

"Hyii..."

"She didn't do anything to us, but since Leo realised that she was a fake, we decided to retreat to here."

Eris said that and looked at Leo.

And for some reason Lara looked especially proud.

Eris pat her on the head and turned back to look at Rudeus.

"So, just what was that?"

"Umm..."

Rudeus began a detailed explanation.

That the Automaton that he and Zanoba made ran away.

And how by the footprints around the teleport magic formations they had concluded that it was in the Magic City Sharia.

After that the two had followed it through the formation, woke up Julie who was lazing around in the workshop and enlisted the help of the Rudo Mercenary corp to search.

Using the incident with Elinalise as a starting point they had found it once but lost it again.

They had received reports of sightings over town and so after using his clairvoyance eye from the city walls, they confirmed that it was heading towards the office.

Concluding that its goal was the office they went ahead.

And while observing the direction the doll was coming from with the clairvoyance eye, Eris had arrived.

"She didn't seem all that bad though."

"For now yes. But if we don't find it quickly, we don't know what will

happen...”

Rudeus’s tone was resolute.

Rudeus believed that the doll had a flaw.

In the Automaton’s core were certain Directives.

Ensure Human Safety, Obey Commands, Self-Preservation.

In other words, the three laws of robotics.

But the doll had disobeyed orders and ran.

Which meant that there was, at the least, a flaw with the 『Obey Commands』 Directive.

For now, its interactions with Eris and Elinalise only ended with a conversation.

There hadn’t yet been any casualties but thinking that it was because of the 『Ensure Human Safety』 Directive would be wishful thinking.

If the 『Ensure Human Safety』 Directive wasn’t in effect, there was no telling if it would suddenly start a massacre.

“Eris, could you tell me in detail what you talked about with it?”

“In detail? It was mostly just small talk... If I remember right—”

Eris tried to remember the conversation she had with the doll.

But the more she talked the stiffer his face got.

His and Zanoba’s conversation, Elinalise’s conversation and Eris’s conversation.

Putting those together, he came up with a hypothesis of the doll’s actions.

When talking with Elinalise, it had constantly asked questions about his wives.

Last night, Rudeus had said that they would dispose of it because it would make his wives mad.

The doll had heard that.

The 『Obey Commands』 Directive didn't seem to be functioning
But if the 『Self-Preservation』 Directive was in place it wouldn't be
abnormal for it to take defensive manoeuvres.

But what would count as self-preservation?
In other words, to dispose whatever was threatening its existence.
What was threatening it?
That would be Rudeus's wives.

It didn't attack the sleeping Zanoba and Rudeus most likely because
they were registered as Masters.
It may be contradictory but with a bug in it, contradictory actions
wouldn't be odd.

Therefore the doll began to look into who his wives were.
And thought that it should erase them.

That said, all it did was talk to Eris, who should have been a target.
Which would disprove the theory.
No, maybe not.
Looking at the contents of its conversation with Eris, it seemed to be
investigating which of his wives needed to be eliminated.
In other words, which one was the biggest threat to its existence.
It probably planned to eliminate the biggest obstacle.
And its conversation with Eris made the biggest obstacle perfectly clear.

“And after hearing where Sylphy was it headed back towards the city.”

Hearing that, his face went completely white.

“Sylphy's in danger!”

Rudeus began running towards the house, but immediately turned
around and headed back to the office.
Once he was back in the office, he took a deep breath.

Once he had calmed down and caught his breath, he look at the surroundings.

The Rudo mercenaries, Zanoba, Julie, Alek, Elinalise and Clive, and his own children.

Rudeus first turned to the bored looking Alek and lowered his head.

“Alek, I’ll be leaving the children and Julie here. Can I leave them to you?”

“Yes, of course.”

First, ensure the safety of the children.

If Orsted was here, he would have had Alek do something else but it couldn’t be helped since he was out.

For the time being, since Alek was protecting them, they would be fine. Julie was against being left behind, and since the doll walked past her while she was sleeping it would probably be fine, but it was decided that she would stay back on standby.

“Eris and Elinalise, I’d like you to head towards to school.

There’s a chance that it might go for Roxy.

There’s already a group of the Rudo Mercenaries stationed at the school so meet up with them.”

“Got it.”

“Understood.”

There was already a search group at the school lead by Rinia.

The doll said it was heading towards Sylphy but they still didn’t know what it was going to do.

It was better to have backup on the chance something did happen.

“Half of the mercenaries are to head to Aisha and give a detailed report. Let her know that on the chance that things go south to request assistance from Pergius-sama.”

“Yessir!”

If they could borrow Pergius’s power, they could probably capture the

doll in an instant.

Rudeus didn't think it would get this serious, so not only had he yet to contact his house, he regretted the fact that he had delayed telling everyone else.

Although it wasn't certain they would need to rely on him yet.

"The other half of the mercenaries are to head back to Zanoba's workshop.

"Understood."

The doll had been moving all around but it's possible that it was all a diversion and it's real goal was to escape from Rudeus.

It could head back to the Asura Empire the way it came and simply run away.

There was a part of him that thought it would be fine to let the dangerous existence leave them... but it was something he had created himself. He had to take responsibility and deal with it until the end.

"Zanoba, you'll come with me to the house and ensure Sylphy's safety."

"Roger that."

"Alright, everyone, begin operation!"

On Rudeus's command, everyone scattered.

The people left in the office were the children, Leo, Julie, and Alek.

"Now then, until your father returns, you can play with onii-san over here."

Almost the instant their parents disappeared,
The smiling Alek began to talk to worried looking children.

Chapter 12: The Day The Doll Walked - Final Part

At that time, Sylphy was at home looking after the 4th daughter Christina.

"That's good Chris,¹ now take your hands off and walk towards mama."
"Hmh~! Mama you come here...!"

Compared to the fast learner Lily, Chris could only barely walk while holding onto something.

And so recently she had been undergoing training like this with her mothers.

Although Chris had never really liked it and was shaking her head on the brink of tears.

"No you come over here, come on, do it slowly, slowly."

"Hm! Uuh... Mama~... Come..."

"No. Come on, I'm right over here."

Chris was grumbling and crying.

That said, it wasn't something she couldn't do.

She just likes to be spoiled.

"*hic*... aah!"

She eventually shut her eyes, toddled over to Sylphy and jumped into her arms.

"There, there. You did great. Good girl."

"Nn~..."

Sylphy held Chris as she always did and stroked her head.

Chris, still sniffing, held onto Sylphy.

Compared to the energetic and curious Lilly, Chris was quite timid and withdrawn.

She belonged to the indoor faction and never went out much. Eris occasionally took her out with the others, but she would always be stuck to her and she would often start crying and come right home because she was scared. Therefore she wouldn't go out on walks and spent most of her time home.

"Chris, you're too shy. I wonder where you get that from..."

Slyphy said that, but, well, it definitely came from Rudeus.

"Mama... Papa, not home yet?"

"No, he's not home just yet."

Chris is what you would call a daddy's girl. Ever since she was born she was always quick to cry but whenever she was in Rudeus's arms she would always stop. She was the complete opposite of Ars. Lately, Rudeus's lap has been her reserved seat.

"Aah!"

"...Hmm?"

She had heard a sound from the entrance. Someone had probably come home.

"Papa?"

"I wonder... I don't think it is."

Rudeus had left yesterday. He hadn't given an exact time, but he said he'd be 2~3 days. So he shouldn't be back yet.

"Onee-chan?"

"It's a bit too soon to be Onee-chan."

It wasn't quite time for Lucy and Roxy to be back from school, or for Aisha to finish with the Mercenaries.

It could be Eris back from her walk.

No, She was out with the playful Sieg, so she'd probably be out a bit longer.

Then Lillia and Ars back from shopping.

No, the two of them just left. It would be too fast.

It's possible that they could be coming back because they forgot something...

It could be Zenith.

She was sleeping in her room, but she could have made her way into the garden without anyone seeing.

Sylphy kept thinking all kinds of things and put Chris on the couch.

"Chris, wait here."

Sylphy, somewhat baffled, headed towards the entrance.

After she left the living room and was halfway down the hallway, she heard a creak.

The door was half open.

But what Sylphy was looking at wasn't the door.

"..."

She was standing inside.

Sillouetted by the setting sun of the half open door, she stood there.

A black haired girl.

Just by appearance, she was the girl called Nanahoshi.

If they were closer, she might have called out to her.

But the moment Sylphy saw her, she frowned.

"...You're not Nanahoshi are you?"

Hearing that, the girl's lips warped into a smile.

With the lighting behind her, the look gave an ominous vibe.

"Yes. That is correct. How did you come to know?"

"Nanahoshi comes to our house quite often. Whenever she opens the door she has habit. She'll always knock twice and if there's no response, she'll open the door slightly and ask "Is anyone home?"² quietly."

Sylphy said that and put mana into her right hand.

An unknown existence imitating their friend had infiltrated her house.

For Sylphy, who had decided to protect their house, it was a matter of course.

For now, she couldn't feel any animosity from the girl in front of her.

Her voice didn't contain any emotion, but the way she spoke was polite.

But Sylphy wasn't naive enough to assume she was an ally.

"Who are you? If you're one of Hitogami's underlings, I'll be the one to take you on."

Saying that, gears began to turn in Sylphy's head.

She would blind the girl in front of her and grab Chris from the living room and Zenith from the second floor and run.

They had long since prepared for the possibility that someone would invade their house, but could she herself carry it out.

There hadn't been any sounds of battle, but Beet, coiled around the gate had probably already begun.

She had used her ring to signal Eris and Roxy, but would they notice?

Would Orsted and Alek in the office be able to grasp the situation.

She had to run.

Or at least stall for time.

Thinking all kinds of things, she glared at the opponent in front of her.

"I currently do not have a name."

"...?"

"Would it be possible for me to hear your name?"

"Sylphyette Greyrat."

Being suddenly asked, Sylphy reflexively responded.

"Then that would make you Rudeus-sama's wife, Sylphy-sama correct?"

"That's... right."

It had confirmed her name.

She had reflexively responded, thinking that it might have been better not to answer, Sylphy continued to remain vigilant.

It didn't look like she had a weapon.

She looked full of openings.

But Sylphy couldn't let her guard down. There were plenty of people that could overwhelm others empty handed.

"Would my presence cause Rudeus-sama to incur your anger?"

"...?"

"Sylphy-sama, why can you not agree to me?"

"I don't understand, what are you talking about..."

I was distracted. I shouldn't listen to her.

This could be some kind of illusion.

Sylphy thought that for an instant a took a wary step back.

"That is dangerous."

That instant, the girl shouted and reached out.

Her speed outclassed Sylphy.

The opponent was clearly faster than her, but Sylphy expected that.

She couldn't see it, but she could react.

The second her footing was stable, she would dodge to the side and counter by striking her with her magic.

The instant Sylphy decided that...

"Aah!"

She realised that Chris was by her feet.

When?

Right, when had Chris managed to toddle to the entrance.

She hadn't listened when Sylphy had told her to "wait here"

And by some twist of fate, she was right where Sylphy was about to step.

Once she realised, it was too late.

She had to somehow avoid stepping Chris.

But her balance was broken.

She wasn't certain she could get out of the way on her unstable footing.

And reflected in Sylphy's eye was a girl's hand that shot forward with incredible speed.

When Rudeus arrived, the house was eerily calm.

Beet's post.

Aisha's garden.

Leo's dog house.

No one was there.

Peeking through the unlocked entrance, he could see the cleanly swept hallway and living room door.

It was calm.

No, it wasn't that there was no sound.

Only a cry resounded throughout the house.

It was a voice he knew well.

It was Chris's cry.

It was a cry of heartbreak.

It sounded like something important had been lost, as if alluding to some great sadness.

To Rudeus, it was a familiar cry.

A cry that whenever he approached, would quickly stop.

And although he heard it, for some reason, he still thought it was calm.

"...The mercenaries are to remain on standby."

Rudeus issued that order, opened the door as silently as possible and went inside.

Here, it was also calm.

The hall was clean.

He could see his own pale face reflected in the mirror set in the entranceway.

By, what was it?

What was the smell irritating his nose?

It was by no means a pleasant smell.

It was the kind of smell, that if locked up with, would make you want to vomit.

It was the kind of smell that would gather flies.

And as if invited by that smell, Rudeus walked down the hallway.

His destination was the living room.

It was where the sound was coming from, and he was confident that was where the smell was coming from too.

He looked at the tightly closed living room door.

Rudeus resolved himself and opened it.

An unbelievable scene opened up before him.

What first entered his eyes was the top of the table.
Chris was laying down crying.

And leaning over Chris was the black haired doll.

The doll's hand was dirtied.
A light brown like dried blood covered it.

That brown had lost its moisture and was giving off a strong smell.
It was a choking smell.
That smell couldn't possibly be...

"Oh, come on, you got poop on your hand didn't you."
"It's not a problem. This level of filth will not hinder movement."
"No, you have to properly wipe it off, see. After that, you wrap the
diaper up like this and put it in the basket to wash later."
"After getting dirty, immediately proceed to wash, correct? It has been
committed to memory."

Sylphy wiped the doll's hands clean.
The substance covering the doll's hands and the smell in the hallway.

It was Chris's poop.

Chris was sleeping on the table but when her diaper was taken off, she
began to cry.

"Papa! It's Papa!"

But as soon as she saw Rudeus, she stopped crying and smiled as sweet
as a flower.

"...Hmm?"

Rudeus had a certain amount of expectations.

Sylphy fighting.

His wounded family... Or possibly his collapsed unmoving family.

But the sight of the doll clumsily changing a diaper was entirely outside of his predictions.

"Aah, welcome home Rudy"

"Sylphy, it looks like... you're fine..."

"Of course. There's no way I wouldn't be."

Sylphy nodded and the doll behind her stood up.

Expressionless.

It's inhuman face was ominous enough that it seemed as if it would stab a dagger through Sylphy's chest any second.

But the doll saw Rudeus's gaze and took a small step behind Sylphy.

Almost as if it was using Sylphy as a shield.

But Rudeus saw something different.

It was as if the doll was afraid of being seen though by Rudeus.

"Sylphy, do you think you could step away from the doll?"

"...Why?"

Sylphy took a stance to protect the doll.

"That doll is something Zanoba and I made but it went berserk.

It probably overheard our conversation and went to eliminate you thinking it could take your place."

Rudeus realised halfway through his explanation that something was wrong.

"But it seems that we were somewhat mistaken."

That said, the fact that they didn't know doll's goal hadn't changed.

Rudeus didn't unfasten his guard and glared at the doll.

"Hmm, that's a bit different from the story I heard."

"What have you heard?"

Seeing Rudeus confused, Sylphy smiled.

"Yeah. It's not all that short so you should sit down."

"Yeah..."

As he was told, Rudeus went and sat down cross-legged.
Sylphy let out a "Hmm?" and tilted her head to the side.

"Rudy. Isn't the way you're sitting wrong?"

"Eh!? Aah, yes."

Rudeus knew what Sylphy's tone meant and changed his posture.
What he could feel from her tone of voice was anger.
Which meant that Rudeus had no pose besides Seiza.

"Ok then, go ahead."

Seeing that he had complied, Sylphy turned around and walked behind the doll.
She pushed the doll towards Rudeus and it stared at him expressionlessly.

"Master Rudeus, are you going to dispose of me?"

"Yes, we are."

Hearing Rudeus's immediate reply, the doll didn't stir one bit.
But Rudeus knew.

With its skeletal frame of the same composition as the Magic Armour and its specially created artificial flesh, it had the combat power of a Saint Class swordsman.

If such a dangerous existence would no longer listen, there was no other option than to destroy it.

Wearing the Magic Armour and using his Magic Eye, he wouldn't fall behind.

That said, he couldn't let down his guard.

".....I do not wish to be disposed of."

Rudeus suddenly realised.

"..."

The doll was frightened.

It appeared to simply be standing there.

Its face, expressionless.

It's tone, unwavering.

But he knew it was frightened.

The doll moved its gaze towards Sylphy.

Its inhuman eyes somehow seemed to be asking Sylphy for help.

"It seems Rudy doesn't understand, you'll have to explain it to him from the start."

Sylphy said that and the doll once more looked at Rudeus and Zanoba who entered the house before anyone realised.

And it began to talk.

"Rudeus-sama and Zanoba-sama had said:

That by being here, Rudeus-sama's wives would get mad.

Elinalise-sama said that Rudeus's wives are Sylphy-sama, Eris-sama and Roxy-sama.

Eris-sama said that she had once heard that Sylphy-sama could not accept Nanahoshi.

Elinalise-sama referred to me as Nanahoshi.

I thought, it had to be my resemblance to Nanahoshi that would be the

cause for my disposal.

But I am not Nanahoshi.

Which would mean that there must be some way to prevent it.”

Her voice was monotone, but the desperation could be felt.

The doll was searching for a solution to its impending death.

“I do not wish to be disposed of.

Rudeus-sama and Zanoba-sama were both joyful at my creation.

I wish to be of use to the two of you.

Being disposed of, is not something I wish to happen.”

When using Summoning Magic, on occasion, the summoned being could be too powerful and cause harm to the caster.

But they fundamentally cannot harm the caster.

A summoned Magic Beast is loyal to its master.

Causing harm to the caster can only be a result of actions taken for the sake of the caster.

The doll also contained this principle.

Pergius’s Summoning Magic was used as the basis after all.

There’s no way it wouldn’t be there.

That said, Pergius’s spirits possess self-awareness.

From the moment they are summoned they move with a sense of self.

For the sake of their master.

Using their long lives to be of use for even longer.

“Therefore, given the information that I obtained, I decided I would question Sylphy-sama whom I deduced to be challenging my existence.”

She had never broken the three laws of robotics.

Her nature as a summoned spirit has simply taken precedence.

“So I asked her, “What should I do to have you consent to me””

The doll had suddenly appeared and barged into the house.
It had Sylphy far more wary than usual.

But the doll had never possessed hostility.
As opposed to Sylphy who had nothing but animosity, it simply gave a terrible smile and wanted to talk.
And when it saw that Sylphy was about to fall over and land on Chris, it saved her and was worried if they were hurt.
When it noticed that Chris had had an accident in her pants from fear of being stepped on, it offered to change her diaper.

She had come to plea to Sylphy.
“I do not wish to die, I will fix any problem you might have with me, I wish to be of use, so please don’t kill me, please”

Those words struck Sylphy’s heart.

“Rudy, I won't get mad.
I already knew you wanted to create something like this.
It’s a lot more, human, than I imagined...
But she’s a good girl, even if she’s got some kind of flaw, I’d like to put her to use.”

Sylphy’s words ended the doll’s explanation.
Now they could only wait for Rudeus’s decision.
Rudeus’s mouth was in the shape of an \wedge , his arms were crossed and his head was down.
His shoulders were trembling.

“Uuu.”

Zanoba who was standing behind him also began to tremble.
Just as Sylphy was about to ask what was going on,

“Waaaaaah!”

Zanoba let out a cry and ran towards the girl.

“To think that you had thought about it like that!

To think that it was all for our sake!

I am sorry for saying you had gone berserk! It was my mistake!”

Zanoba, crying a waterfall of tears, hugged the doll.

Seeing the two of them like that, Rudeus let out a little snuffle.

His eyes were also moist.

Rudeus took his handkerchief out of his top pocket and blew his nose.

He stood up and took the doll’s hand.

“It’s just like Zanoba said. Hearing that you’re going to be disposed right to your face, of course you’d run.

You’d try to look for a way out...

I understand. Since Sylphy isn’t going to get mad, Zanoba and I are going to properly finish you and properly put you to work.”

“And I shall no longer fear Julie’s indignation!”

The two were clinging to the doll crying.

Sylphy could see that the doll was somewhat surprised.

Confused that although the problem wasn’t resolved, it was being forgiven.

Well in any case, it had been settled.

Sylphy was filled with pleasant feelings and pat Chris, who was feeling lonely being ignored by Rudeus, on the head.

But then she thought about something.

“Rudy, I just have one last question. Why did you think I would get mad?”

Rudeus began to quiver when he heard that.

He turned around and once more knelt down.

Cough

He began his explanation.

“Actually, the doll, down there, is quite elaborately — —”

Sylphy got mad.

In any case, that was the end of this series of events.
Whether Rudeus got to sleep with his wives that night was another matter.

As a result of this incident, the doll’s disposal was dismissed.
Their plan became to maintain the doll to the best of their abilities.

And the doll that played the central role in the incident, was assigned a legitimate unit number.

Automaton No.01.

After that, Rudeus continues his experiments in the Lab and the Magic City Sharia and advanced many of his various plans.

But that’s another story.

Nanahoshi also became aware of the doll’s secret.

Discovering that a doll with her face functioned sexually, she was clearly displeased.

But after Rudeus prostrated himself and told her that he had already promised Sylphy that he wouldn’t use it to that end, she somewhat forgave him.

“Well, it’s fine. So, what’s her name?”

“We haven’t come up with one yet.”

“Really? Do you want me to give it one them?”

And so Nanahoshi named the doll.

The Automaton No.01 would be known as『Anne』.

And in case Nanahoshi’s acquaintance were to ever appear, in order for him to be able to know of her existence, the doll would be given a Japanese-like name and so,『Nanahoshi Hajime』³ was chosen.

If she were to ever meet Nanahoshi’s friend, after saying that name, she would proceed to tell of her relation to Nanahoshi.

And so it’s official designation was『Automaton SS-01 Anne』.⁴

They didn’t yet know if Unit No.02 would be Deux and and Unit No.03 Trois, but they would work that out when they got there.

The SS stood for Seven Star.

That was how the first product of the Seven Star Series『Anne』was completed.

And her brothers and sisters slowly increased over the years.

But let it be known, that she was the only one with nipples.

Chapter 13: A Day at the Office

I wake from my sleep.

It feels like a great morning.

At one time, this was the moment I most feared.

I feared that I would be killed in my sleep, or wake up someplace that wasn’t my bed like a dim forest.

Until I found a bed that I felt was safe, I was always afraid of sleeping. But there were also times when the lack of sleep chipping away at my alertness almost got me killed.

It got better when I found a technique that let me stay wary while sleeping...

But during those days, I never would have thought that I would eventually be able to sleep without worry.

“...”

I steady my breathing and head for the office's study.

The study is piled up with documents detailing the differences between the original history and the current loop.

Written in them is the 『Original』 and the 『Alternate』 .

The history where I did nothing is the 『Original』 .

And events that changed as a result of my actions are the 『Alternate』 .

I write these documents for the sake of defeating Hitogami.

To defeat Hitogami, I have exhausted no little amount of effort but there is a need to reach where he is.

The battle with Laplace 80 years from now is especially important.

Minimising our losses against him is directly related to defeating Hitogami.

And for that purpose, I'm going to freely use the 『Original』 and the 『Alternate』 to change history and ensure we have as much fighting power as possible.

Of course, since I can't take the documents with me on the next loop, right before each loop I organise all my actions and have no choice but to memorise them and try again.

But this loop is different.

Rudeus Greyrat is here.

With each person he encounters, the world greatly changes.

I had intended to record the differences as usual, but before I knew it they had turned into an observation diary of him.

Most of the pages have Rudeus's name written on them.

And with so many changes, my writings can't keep up.

I had originally intended to keep a detailed record of all events until the

end of the loop but quite a bit of information has probably been left out.

Honestly, I don't think it has much point.

There's something odd about this loop.

It feels like something special is going on.

The chance of Rudeus being in the next loop is quite small which would render all these notes meaningless.

I most likely have to win with this loop.

That is what fate dictates.

We must store up as much fighting power as possible, I'll preserve as much of my Mana as possible and defeat Laplace with the bare minimum, so as to go all out against Hitogami.

That said, there's no reason to not take notes.

If I am to fail and on the next loop, Rudeus is still there, this information will certainly prove a powerful weapon.

"..."

And now I'll record today's happenings.

First up is the information that came through the Lithograph.

Thanks to this communication lithograph, collecting information has gotten considerably easier.

In all the previous loops, if some change occurred, without going to the scene and collecting the information myself, I wouldn't be able to know the result.

I had gotten used to it, but due to my curse, it was quite stressful work.

Compared to that, now I can do nothing but sit and the information comes flowing in.

Before I had to go through a number of loops to know the full extent of the changes resulting from a single action, the difference in convenience is astounding.

Although, if Rudeus didn't exist, I would never have needed such a comprehensive information network.

I alone would never have caused so much change.

If too much was changed, on the next loop I would wonder where to begin.

And I'm still troubled on how to treat the Automaton he created.

I saw the doll he had named Anne, but I never thought something like that could be made with human hands.

Pergius was surprised too, that it was more human than his spirits.

That doll is most likely the existence that the Mad Dragon King Chaos dreamed of.

Chaos has already passed and is no longer in this world, but if he was still alive, he would have loved to join them in their doll making.

If he is still in the next loop, I guess I'll put off collecting his treasure.

"Alright."

While thinking such things, when I looked at the communication lithograph I saw something rather interesting.

Information from Ariel.

It seemed as though Doga and Isolte got married.

As far as I could remember, the two of them were never married.

The chance of Isolte ever getting married was always quite small.

And children go without saying.

This would also have to be because of Rudeus.

How would I ever manage to reproduce this.

At my current level, I haven't a clue...

Although before I attempt to reproduce such an occurrence, I would have to see what kind of person their child is and what kind of role

they'd play.

Depending on the circumstances, I may end up preventing their child from being born.

But if I did that, Rudeus would most likely oppose me.

"..."

I do not wish to lie to or deceive Rudeus.

Even if in the case that he's in the next loop, he'd forget about everything.

"Good morning!"

Mid way through my documentation Rudeus appeared.

"...Yes."

"Is it paperwork again today? You're always so devoted Orsted-sama."

"No more than usual"

"The fact that it's usual is what's important! Life is long after all so you have to take it little by little! As expected of Orsted-sama! You do understand!"

Rudeus sometimes gets strange.

He's normally quite docile.

But his attitude does follow a pattern.

When he gets this high spirited, it's because something good is happening.

And conversely, when he's very quiet and apologetic it means he has something hard to say.

He's rather easy to read.

"What's happening today?"

“As expected of the President! Vigilant as always! Hehe, This morning Lara said that she wanted to be with papa forever! How do I put it. Ehehe.

Chris is always clinging to me but I never expected to hear it from Lara, so I was a little excited. Hehe.”

“Did you bring them with you?”

“Yeah. I brought Lara and Sieg here on Leo.”

Sieg as well hmm.

That’s somewhat unexpected.

But when I thought that, Rudeus’s complexion took a turn.

“Aah, about Sieg! It seems that he’s a fan of Alek.

He enjoyed the story of the Biheilil Kingdom that he heard from Alek. And he asked me if I was going to meet with the North God-sama to take him along so he could hear the story again.

He’s with Alek right now.”

“Right.”

“Umm... Should I not have brought children to the office after all...”

“No, I don’t mind.”

Rudeus’s Achilles’ heel is his family.

He treasures them. Rudeus lives for his family.

He’d do anything for his family, and if you hurt them, you will become his enemy.

He’ll hit you with all kinds of unthinkable attacks from all directions, and when it looks like he’s about to lose, he’d easily throw away his pride and betray Hitogami or the like and beg for forgiveness.

I can’t name too many people as devoted as he is.

So to be his ally, you have to pay attention to his family.

At the very least, any mistreatment is forbidden.

Which is why I’ll assure their safety to the best of my ability.

As long as I protect what is precious to Rudeus, he won’t betray me.

That would be impossible for Hitogami.

Leaving aside the calculating thoughts, it's quite bizarre that Rudeus's children are immune to the curse. But I don't dislike it.

I don't dislike the liveliness.

It almost makes me feel like a normal person.

"Because your children are cute."

I had intended to complement his children with a smile...

But Rudeus's expression became serious.

Not good, this look is not good.

That is Rudeus's cautious look.

I'll have to be careful.

This man can suddenly go from peaceful to pulling off unbelievable things.

It might seem fine, but it's possible the next time I wake up I might be buried alive.

At this instant it would be simple to defeat him but if he came at me with a surprise attack...

"Even if it's Orsted-sama, I won't give you my daughter."

"...That wasn't my intention."

With that, Rudeus's face returned to normal.

"I'll bring the two in to say hello later."

"I don't mind. There's no need to be respectful."

"Is that right... Well, Lara is a somewhat impolite girl, so that's probably for the better."

Rudeus sat down on the sofa.

"Well then, let's work hard at work today as well! What shall we do today?"

A mock battle with the 『MK 1』 ? Or maybe an adjustment of the Curse nullification Helmet?

Or maybe we should check on the progress of the 『MK 3』 or the adjustment of the 『MK 0』 ?
Or we could conduct another meeting on our future actions...”

They’re all things Rudeus is in charge of.
He probably wants to show off to his children.
But a little bit before when I was filling in my files, I remembered something.
It’s just something small regarding the war with Laplace but it would be better to do it now.

“Yes, about that...”

This year a drought in the southern part of the central continent will cause a famine.
A number of families will die.

But that in itself isn’t important.
It’s the natural course of things.

The problem is one particular household among them.
It’s an unimportant house without any particular characteristics, but the youngest son alone is special.
If he is allowed to grow up, he will become an excellent commander.
And he will be in charge of the defensive battle at East Port against Laplace.
He displays unrivalled commanding ability and manages to delay the King Dragon King army for a substantial amount of time.

Normally I would make sure the Laplace war doesn’t occur, and it’s better to not intervene considering mana conservation.
But this time, although the war with Laplace is unavoidable, Rudeus is also here.
So considering the direction we’re heading, it would be better to make sure they survive.

“And that’s how it is.”

After my explanation, Rudeus seemed somewhat disappointed.

“Lara won’t be able to see me working on a business trip...”

“Then it’s fine if you leave tomorrow.”

Seeing how disappointed he was, I offered an alternative but Rudeus shook his head.

“No, without knowing exactly when they’ll starve, it’s better to act quickly.

I don’t think we’ll be late but humans are fragile, it wouldn’t be odd for them to die any day.

I have arrangements to set out in place for time such as this so it would be best to leave as soon as possible.”

But somehow I ended up convincing him.

“If that is fine with you then so be it.”

“Of course. I’ll begin preparations immediately.”

Rudeus immediately left for the office’s warehouse to pickup the equipment he always has on stand by.

He returned about fifteen minutes after that.

He’s dressed in traveling clothes with a backpack full of provisions, the Scroll Vernier, and all kinds of other things.

He faces me and brings his fingers together and with his flat hand he hits his forehead.

“Well then, I’m sorry to ask this but if you could please take the two of them home at a suitable time.

Leo is with them so they should be fine, but it would be too late by the time something happens.”

That goes without saying.

I have no intention to make light of the reason that he's my ally.

"Of course."

"Well then, I'll be off."

After he says that, he immediately heads to the basement where the teleport magic circles are located.

In these past few years, his decision-making time on these kinds of actions has shrunk.

And he will almost certainly accomplish his mission.

I had used people to accomplish tasks in previous loops before.

I have also had people you could call subordinates.

But I have never had someone so capable who would faithfully carry out my orders.

I can somewhat understand the feelings of Hitogami as he manipulates his apostles.

"..."

I could tell that I had knitted my eyebrows.

Rudeus is a reliable man, but I shouldn't overuse him.

At the very least, feeling like Hitogami is not a good thing.

That said, the things I can do are not many.

I have already used too much Mana in this loop.

I may have decided that I would fight with Rudeus, but it still isn't a good enough reason to waste Mana.

"..."

For now I put on the curse nullification helmet and head outside.

When I pass Faria she jumps a little.

"Aah! If it isn't the president."

I seem to have surprised her.
But thanks to the helmet, it's only to that extent.
Without it, her reaction would be quite different.
The way to make it has been recorded in the documents. Improving in
would be difficult but reproducing it is possible.

"Rudeus-sama just went out a little while ago, is Orsted-sama also
setting out? Would you like a companion?"

"No need. I'm only going a short distance. I'll be back soon."

"Understood."

I head outside.
I could hear a voice coming from the side.

"It was then! Whoosh! Taking advantage of the slight opening, the
Sword King Eris cut off the Third's arm!"

A voiced echoed in the back courtyard, originating from a small patch of
shade.

"Standing before the now one armed Third was North God Kalman the
Second and the Demon Lord Atofe Ratofe!
Behind him, the Mad Sword King Eris and Sorcerous King Rudeus!
His front and back were covered by people who wouldn't listen! There
was no use in talk!
The duel was practically decided! The Third prepared himself!
But in the moment they thought victory was in their grasp! Whoosh! The
Third ran into the Earth Dragon valley!"

Under the shade there was a man sitting on a rock.
And on the ground in front of him, a young boy.

The man on the rock is North God Kalman III Aleksander Ryback.
The young boy is Sieg Saladin Greyrat.
He's gotten much bigger since I last saw him.

Time really does fly by quite quickly.

“The Third ran!

Deciding that he would have his chance at victory another time, he fled into the Earth Dragon Valley.

There was no human who follow him into the valley and live.

The only two were his wounded father Alex and the Demon Lord Atofe!”

“Those two aren’t human?”

“Correct! The two of them aren’t human!

They possess the blood of the Immortal Demon race!

And their opponent who had just barely escaped from them was the same!

But then! Wham! With a huge sound, a giant had flown!

Who was it that jumped in!

Was it the Second? The Demon Lord? The Mad Sword King!?

No! It was Rudeus Greyrat!”

“Papa!”

Sieg is in a daze with Alek’s story, but I wonder where Lara is?

I tried searching for a presence and there was one coming from the mountain of straw in the office garden.

When I went to take a look, there was a blue haired girl calmly napping on top of it.

At her feet a huge white beast is keeping watch.

Lara and the Sacred Beast Leo.

Lara is the Saviour that the Sacred Beast chose, but looking at her like this, she’s nothing more than a child.

But I wonder why she suddenly said she wanted to be with Rudeus.

I just parted with Rudeus at the entrance to the office so I don’t think more than an hour has passed...

Come to think of it, I remember hearing that Lara liked pranks.

Perhaps to get out of being punished for pulling some joke, she used her father.

If that's the case, I feel sorry for Rudeus, being used like that...

"Still riding his half destroyed Magic Armour, he alone chased after me!
All by himself!

He hit the Third who was trapped in the air! Wham! He hit the Third
with the huge Magic Armour! And hit! And hit!

BOOOOOOOM! The Third and Rudeus crashed into the floor of the
Earth Dragon Valley!

When the dust cleared, standing there was the one-legged, one-armed
Third!

And Rudeus, his Magic Armour full of cracks!

Nobody was coming to help. It was a one on one fight!"

"One on one!"

It seems like Alek is telling Sieg the story of the Biheilil Kingdom.

Lara most likely fell asleep right as she got here so he's been entertaining
Seig.

"But Rudeus didn't have the strength to overcome the Third.

He managed to cut off a hand with a surprise attack, but that wasn't
enough to defeat him!

The Third thought that and began to carefully observe Rudeus.

He had let down his guard.

He thought that because Rudeus is a Magician, in a fight, he would
shoot off his specialty the Stone Cannon while retreating.

He didn't think he could lose to someone who did nothing but run
away!

Rudeus did exactly that! He ran and shot Stone Cannons!

He may have underestimated his opponent, but the Third was a battle
hardened veteran!

To avoid the Stone Cannon, the Third retreated for an instant!

But it disappeared from right in front of him! It was a feint!"

"A Feint!"

"Klang! The second he realised, the Third sent out a slash! Too weak!

Because of the feint, because he took a step back it wasn't a fatal wound!

But it still worked! The Third flew backwards but suddenly... his foot

floated in the air.

It was Rudeus! He still had a trump card saved right for the very end!

Gravity manipulation!

The same magic as the King Dragon Sword Kajakt! The Third for just an instant, floated!

Wham! The instant he realised, the third had already been sent flying!

Bang Bang Bang Bang Bang Bang Bang! He hit! And he hit! And he hit!

Rudeus's strongest Magic Tool blasted the Third into pieces! Dudududu!

The Third was no longer breathing...

He could no longer stand.

Kling...! The King Dragon Sword fell from his hand.

Rudeus had won!"

"Hooray!"

Sieg let out a cheer.

Alek seems satisfied talking about his own defeat.

Feeling the pleasant atmosphere I walk up to Alek.

"Aleksander Rybak."

"Oh, If it isn't Orsted-sama! Are you heading out?"

"No, Rudeus just departed."

"I saw, he entrusted the children to me. He said to take them home at an opportune time and explain the situation to his wives."

I see, Rudeus left it to Alek.

There's no reason for me to go... I guess.

"That's good to hear. I'll leave it to you."

"Yes sir!"

I nodded at his response and headed back inside.

Evening.

After completing the first stage of my recount, I left the study.
It seems Alek hasn't yet delivered the two of them home.
The sun is about to set, it would probably be better to have them back sooner.
Fariastia's hours must have ended because she's no longer at the reception.

"Your Papa normally walks around like he's cowardly and incompetent.
In fact, he probably really is a coward.
But when he gets mad he's scarier than anyone else."

Even now, they're still talking.
But now instead of telling a story, he sounds as if he's teaching something.
Sieg is listening with a serious expression.

"When facing that unyielding spirit, I lost.
Orsted-sama apparently had a similar experience.
Of course, someone such as him didn't fail to overcome it like I did.
And because I couldn't defeat his spirit, was most likely the reason I became his subordinate.
But do you understand why both Orsted-sama and I recognise him?"
"Hmm?"
"That's because he's strong."
"Papa, strong? But Papa would lose to Red Mama..."
"Yep. That's right. But it's a little different from normal strength."

I'm also somewhat interested in how Alek sees Rudeus.

"Your Papa has no redeeming features besides his mana.
Your Papa can't wear Touki by nature.
His judgement isn't particularly high, and when confronting unexpected circumstances he'll panic.
His eyes aren't that good. Even with his Magic Eyes, he's only reached the level below Orsted and I.
His reactions are slow. No matter how far ahead he can see with his

Magic Eyes, his body can't keep up.

He'll hesitate when killing people, he has trouble delivering a killing blow to a flesh and blood enemy.

His chantless magic is a point in his favour, his magic activations speed is unmatched among Magicians, but compared to us swordsmen, it's still too slow.

In the time it takes him to kill me with one 『Stone Cannon』 I can kill him three times.

That is to say, no matter what he does, if I feel like it, I can take him out. No matter how many different kinds of tactics he has, none of them have any meaning.

And I'm not even the world's strongest. In just speed, I'm one or two ranks below top class.

Of course, he could retreat and throw out all kinds of complex magic, but him having the chance to do that is unlikely.

In other words, if you systematically analyse him, he just doesn't seem cut out for fighting."

"Papa... Is weak...?"

Sieg looks quite sad.

Having their father admonished to their face, there are very few children who that wouldn't make sad.

Especially because Rudeus showers his children with love.

"Aah, don't give me that look.

I'm not done talking yet.

Listen. The reason your Papa is strong, is because he know his weakness better than anyone.

That's why he can get rid of his weakness and think of how to take advantage of his strong points."

"Hmm?"

"Yup. He can use the Magic Armour to increase his speed many times over.

Meaning that, even if you catch him by surprise, he can still manage to survive.

That means that even I can't take him out.

Of course, he's still not on the same level. The disadvantage doesn't change.

But he has taken a step towards our level.

He can't wear Touki, he's a magician whose only merit is his mana.

But despite that, he doesn't run, he stands against us.

Sometimes fair and square, sometimes cowardly from behind, sometimes borrowing his friends power, and sometimes all by himself.

Do you know why, even though he's at a disadvantage, he can still fight?"

Sieg shook his head.

"It's to protect you.

For the sake of the family he loves dearly, he can't die."

When Alek said that, Sieg's eyes seemed to sparkle.

He excitedly clenched his fist and looked up with a smile plastered on his face.

"Papa really is a Cheddar Man!"

"Yeah, he's a Cheddar Man! A true Hero!"

A word I haven't heard before came up.

Cheddar Man?

Just what kind of metaphor is that?

Or maybe it's a person?

This is the first time I've heard it over the years.

In that case, it might be something Rudeus coined.

That man is constantly creating new words.

I'll ask him next time I see him.

I'll add Cheddar Man to the list of items in my head.

"Hey, North God-sama! I want to be a Cheddar Man too!

"You can, to be a true hero requires effort. My father is a true hero and he said so. Did your Papa not tell you that?"

"Papa didn't say anything."

"Is that so. Well, when you get a bit older, your Papa will tell you too."

"What will effort do?"

"It will make you stronger."

"How?"

"You have to train your body, and study the sword and magic."

"I understand! North God-sama please teach me the sword!"

"Eeh? Me?"

"Can't you?"

"If you want to learn the sword, can't you have your Mama teach you the Sword God Style?"

"I want you to teach me! I wanna surprise Papa and Mama!"

"Although I do consider myself somewhat good, all I could pass onto a disciple of mine is what my father taught me, somewhat badly, I'm not all that cut out for it."

North God Kalman III Aleksander Rybak's childhood memories are quite unpleasant.

When he became a North God, there were more than 20 people studying under him.

But after a few years, they had all separated from Alek to walk their own paths.

After that, Alek never took on another disciple.

"But you look so cool when you're fighting. If I have to study I want it to be with the North God."

"But me taking a disciple with my inexperience..."

Alek seems troubled.

I suddenly remembered Rudeus.

While declaring his own inadequacies, he taught all kinds of people all kinds of things.

And without exception, they were all thankful for it.

I am one of those people.

“Aleksander Ryback. Go ahead and teach him.”

Hearing me say that, Alek seemed quite taken aback.
He looks as if he hadn't even noticed me approach.
Even though that couldn't have been the case.

“Orsted-sama... But I'm still not even qualified as a North God...”
“That's exactly why you should train him. If you watch him and raise him all by yourself, you just might discover just what it is about the North God Style you are lacking.”

In the original history, North God Kalman III Aleksander Ryback corrected himself after losing to Jino Blitz.
And in his despair he took a single child as his disciple.
That child was in no way talented, but by watching him grow and and correcting himself, he matured into a true North God.
And in the second Laplace war, North God Kalman III proved himself to be history's strongest North God.

I don't know where that child might be in the current loop, but Alek has already experienced a loss.
So I might as well accelerate his acceptance of a disciple.

And incidentally, Sieg is also quite talented.
It's most likely the Laplace factor but his physical strength is far above other children.
It's not on the level of the Miko Zanoba, but in the future he'll be able to swing a sword with ease.
Those who stand out from the crowd end up at the North God School.
And this case is no exception.

And while I'm talking, there was one thing that Alek failed to understand.
Rudeus's strength is not just his mana.

It's that when it comes down to it, Rudeus had friends who will come

running for him.

And that he has friends in places other than a battlefield.

In a one on one fight, Alek may be correct...

But by being with his children, maybe he might realise that.

And from that, maybe he'll become a North God more noble and strong than in the original history.

"I'll convince Rudeus for you."

"...If Orsted-sama says so, I understand."

Alek smiled at me and turned to look at Sieg.

"Alright then, Sieg-kun, From tomorrow onwards I'll be training you.

But if you want to surprise your Papa and Mama, you'll have to keep it a secret from them, alright?"

"Yeah!"

Sieg is looking at Alek with sparkling eyes.

Alek seemed bewildered at having such a small disciple after such a long time.

He must be quite enthusiastic to genuinely teach someone swordplay after so long.

They'll definitely make an excellent pair.

But...

"...Aleksander Ryback, may I ask you something?"

"Of course!"

"What's that thing on your back?"

On Alek's back is a large number of some kind of spiky fruit.¹

There's also something that looks like a human child's clothing mixed in. You could call it some kind of prickly child insect.

"Aah, this was Lara-dono's work. She must have been bored because she snuck up to me from behind and stuck it on."

“...”

“It was the doing of a child after all. I’ll remove it later.”

Lara really does like her pranks.
I’m convinced.

“And the girl herself?”
“She went into the office.”

She couldn’t have found her way into one of the teleport magic circles could she?

But the second I thought that and began to search for a presence, she walked out from the Office.

With a blank look, on top of Leo.

Fariastia’s presence was also in the office.

She was most likely keeping Lara company on the second floor.

“Lara-dono! Leo-dono! It’s about time we returned home!”

“...ok.”

Lara grabbed Sieg and pushed him onto Leo’s back.
She then got on herself and proceeded to sit behind Sieg and hold him.

“Then we shall head out.”

Under Alek’s leadership Leo began to walk.

Hmm?

Right as they walked passed me Lara looked at me and gave an evil little laugh of success.

I wonder what the meaning of that was.

I didn’t understand but after seeing them off, I returned to the office.
Fariastia was once again at the reception, probably having come down with Lara.

I told her that it was about time she went home and headed inside.

"Hmm..."

It was then I understood the meaning of Lara's smile.

My chair.

The spiky fruits were scattered all over my chair.

If I were to sit like this, my behind would most likely be covered in them.

A prank.

Feeling the corners of my mouth slightly raise, I gathered the fruits and put them in a bag.

But when I was about to put the bag in the desk I felt something was off.

"Hmm...?"

It was a slight unease.

It's the same unease as an assassin using poison.

Because of my Magic Itemmana bestowed item and Saint Dragon Touki, not even ancient poisons can harm me but I still felt some unease.

"..."

But I had opened the drawer completely off guard.

And then grasshoppers came jumping out at me from inside.

5 of them.

So I was supposed to feel relieved after seeing the spiky fruits and then this was meant to surprise me. A two stage plan.

Lara most likely waited behind the reception until I went out, before intruding to commit the crime.

She must be happy with herself.

"..."

But Lara really is the only one who I have no idea how she'll grow up.
That's most likely what Hitogami is afraid of about that child.

Several day later, Rudeus returned.
He didn't just complete his goal, but apparently also made it rain and
somewhat helped the drought.
He really is an efficient man.

After receiving his report I decided to tell him about Sieg.

"...I would like to have Sieghart commute here regularly."
"Why would that be?"

Naturally he seems somewhat puzzled.
Now how shall I explain it?

"There's something I'm somewhat interested in so I would like to watch
over him."
"...Is it dangerous?"
"No."
"Will he be back by curfew?"
"That's not a problem."
"Understood. For the time being I'll let the women know."

He probably hasn't asked for any more confirmation due to his faith in
me.
Or perhaps he simply gave up due to my insufficient explanation.

"You aren't going to ask?"
"No, I somewhat understand that someone will be teaching him
something... Although I don't understand why it's a secret from me."
"Aah."
"I think it's better that way. Give Alek my regards."

We've been seen through.
But I'm grateful that's the case.
My interactions with Rudeus will continue.
It's better when the other party can understand you.
It's somewhat better as a secret after all.

"Well then, I'll be off."

"Good work today."

Right as Rudeus was about to leave,
I remembered a certain something I wanted to ask.

"Rudeus."

"Yes?"

"What is a Cheddar Man?"

"He's a Hero who's head is made from cheese.
He finds hungry children and tears off bits of his face to feed them.
He defeats bad guys who try to scare people with a single punch."
"...Was there a man like that in your previous world?"
"In my world he was made of bread filled with red bean paste.
But since red bean paste doesn't exist here it was replaced with cheese.
I tell it to the children as a bedtime story."

I learned something.

Cheddar Man.

Although I don't understand why he tears off bits of his face.

"What about it?"

"Nothing, I was just a little curious."

"I see. Then I'll be heading out."

After seeing that Rudeus had left I returned back inside.

When I returned to my desk I saw the bag of spiky fruits that Lara left.
The grasshoppers had already hopped outside.
After she got home she was probably scolded for the prank she was running away from too.

“Haa.”

I let out a sigh.

Lara and Fariastia.
Aleksander and Sieg.
And Rudeus and Cheddar Man.

This loop really is quite fresh.